

MAINE FIRE PROTECTION SERVICES COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
November 7, 2005
(approved on 12/5/05)

Chair Jeffrey Cammack called the Maine Fire Protection Services Commission to order at 1:05 p.m. in Florian Hall, Central Maine Commerce Center, 45 Commerce Drive, Augusta. Members present were Jay Bradshaw, Representative Richard Brown, Chief Jeffrey Cammack, Art Cleaves, Chief John Dean, Representative Robert Duplessie, Chief Darrel Fournier, Alex McPhedran, Geoffrey Maker, Senator Richard Nass, Harty Norris, Chief Jethro Pease, Charles Soltan, Leslie Wiles (for Bill Williams), Steve Willis and Susan Pinette (staff). Members excused were Senator Bruce Bryant, Stephan Bunker, John Cannon, Edward Johnston and David Wacker. Members absent included Jack Berry and Representative Patricia Blanchette. Frank Johnson, State Office of Employee Health and Benefits, and Joseph Ostwald, Director of Construction, Bureau of General Services, attended as guests of the Fire Commission.

A motion by Darrel Fournier, seconded by Richard Nass, to accept the minutes of the October 3, 2005 meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

Chief Cammack recognized Frank Johnson from the State Office of Employee Health and Benefits. Mr. Johnson was invited by the Fire Commission to discuss L.D. 10 “*Resolve, To Fund a Study Regarding Health Care for Maine's Firefighters*”. L.D. 10 was carried over by the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee in June 2005 and the Fire Commission was asked for input. The Fire Commission was recently informed that the CJ/PS committee scheduled a meeting on November 30th to vote on all their carryover bills. Fire Commission members discussed the necessity for the bill and the differences and similarities with L.D. 1021 “*An Act To Implement Task Force Recommendations Relating to Parity and Portability of Benefits for Law Enforcement Officers and Firefighters*”. L.D. 1021 was carried over by the Labor Committee in June 2005. Fire Commission members agreed to attend the CJ/PS meeting and support L.D. 10.

The Fire Commission continued discussing the carryover bills from the last legislative session. L.D 1508 “*An Act To Regulate Fire Alarm Contractors*” was also carried over by the CJ/PS committee and is scheduled to be voted on at the November 30th meeting. Members learned that stakeholders are working on compromise language and expect to present revised language to the CJ/PS committee.

Committee Reports

The Training Facilities committee reported that their grant application has been modified with the changes agreed to by members at the October retreat. The revisions were emailed to members. The MEMA review committee will meet on November 21st and several Fire Commission members have agreed to attend. Members discussed the need to keep the process confidential and were told that a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) is a project to find qualified people rather than bidding on a contract. Terms and conditions are confidential because negotiations are continuing and a contract has not been signed. Fire Commission members discussed whether confidentiality was possible due to the public nature of the grant application process.

The Spring Conference committee has asked General Bill Libby, Adjunct General of Maine, to serve as keynote speaker. The committee expects to have a finalized version of the conference brochure at the December meeting. The committee also reported they expect as many as 60-70 vendors at the conference.

The Best Practices committee continues to encourage members to submit worthy candidates for the 2005 Best Practices Award. Members suggested distributing nomination forms at the Maine Chiefs' meetings, community forums and to Maine Municipal Association.

Old Business

Fire Commission members were updated on the progress of the Task Force to Study the Homeland Security Needs of Maine. The task force has initial approval to hold four meetings throughout the state. The first meeting was on Monday, October 17th in Augusta. The next three meetings will be held in Brunswick on November 17th, Oxford Hills on November 21st and Rockland on November 29th. The meetings start at 3pm and local officials and the public are invited to participate. MEMA has agreed to fund additional meetings and are awaiting approval from the Legislature's Executive Council. Fire Commission members expressed the need for the task force to hold meetings in the northern, eastern and western areas of the state.

Members learned that the truss construction rules continue to progress thorough the APA (Administrative Procedures Act) process and expect to schedule a public hearing within a month. Members discussed submitting legislation in 2006 similar to Bangor's ordinance on marking buildings.

Members next discussed whether the Fire Commission should endorse the use of residential sprinklers in new construction and adoption of the Life Safety Code. A report from Scottsdale Arizona will be forwarded to members prior to the December meeting.

The discussion expanded to the role and vision of the Fire Commission. Members strongly encouraged the Fire Commission to take a lead on the sprinkler issue and other fire safety and fire protection issues. Members wanted to see the Fire Commission take a lead in educating the fire service and the public

and using technology to make people safe. Members agreed “if people can sprinkle their lawns and bushes, then they should be able to put sprinklers in their homes”.

Fire Commission members were informed of a concept plan endorsed by the Maine Fire Chiefs to go to four PSAP (public safety answering point) dispatch centers in the state. These four centers would directly report to MEMA and be funded through a user fee. This concept plan will be proposed to Governor Baldacci on November 17th. Members discussed endorsing the proposed plan and discussing the idea with MMA’s legislative council. Chair Cammack appointed Jethro Pease and Darrel Fournier to represent the Fire Commission in discussions with MMA.

A motion by Richard Nass, seconded by Dick Brown, to support in concept the Maine Fire Chiefs proposal to set up four PSAP dispatch centers in the state. The motion passed unanimously, with one member abstaining.

New Business

The Fire Commission was informed that WCSH-TV (NBC) plans to air stories on fire safety and residential sprinklers during their local news shows starting November 14th. Channel 6 in Portland and Channel 2 in Bangor are the NBC affiliates.

Members also learned that California has now joined New York and Vermont in passing fire safe cigarettes laws. The entire Massachusetts legislature is expected to vote soon on fire safe cigarette legislation that was passed in committee.

A motion by Jethro Pease, seconded by Darrel Fournier, to move the previously scheduled Monday, January 2, 2006 meeting to Monday, January 9, 2006. The motion passed unanimously.

Members agreed to revise the January meeting schedule to accommodate the New Year holiday. The January 2006 meeting will now be scheduled for Monday, January 9th at 1:00 p.m. at the State House. A meeting of the Fire Caucus will be tentatively scheduled for noon.

With no further business to come before the Maine Fire Protection Services Commission, Chair Cammack adjourned the meeting at 3:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan M. Pinette (staff)

FIRE COMMISSION SCHEDULE

Monday, December 5 th	Regular Meeting	Florian Hall 1:00pm
Monday, January 9 th	Fire Caucus	State House 12Noon
Monday, January 9 th	Regular Meeting	State House 1:00pm
Monday, February 6 th	Fire Caucus	State House 12Noon
Monday, February 6 th	Regular Meeting	State House 1:00pm
Monday, March 6 th	Fire Caucus	State House 12Noon
Monday, March 6 th	Regular Meeting	State House 1:00pm
Tuesday, March 21 st	Spring Conference	Augusta Civic Center
Wednesday, March 22 nd	Spring Conference	Augusta Civic Center

Please Note: Florian Hall is located at the Central Maine Commerce Center and is the State Fire Marshal's new meeting room.